

January 18, 2010

To: Hon. Wayne Kuipers
Senate Judiciary Committee
Committee Members

Re: Senate Bill 616-618

My name is Mr. Steven Sharpe. I live in District 7 and am part of the 63% of the voters that passed the Medical Marihuana law in the State of Michigan. The passage of this law has been a huge milestone. It has enabled many people to legally obtain cannabis for medical treatment and others to start a small business to meet their needs. I am gravely concerned that the passage of the bills being considered will be detrimental to patients and caregivers. Big business cannot replace all of the new small businesses. These new small businesses provide a unique ability to meet the personal needs of their patients with quality products tailored for them while allowing the caregiver to make a living. This is no small task in the current economy. I do not believe that ten licensed growers in the state will be able to give that type of service. Many patients may not be able to find a caregiver "dispensary" in their area. Many patients do not have the resources to travel long distances or may not be physically able to. The passage of this bill will reject what the voters wanted for the State of Michigan's population.

I am a patient and a caregiver for others. One of my patients is an autistic 22 year old female. When she first started cannabis treatment she was experiencing 4-5 seizures per day at school. With continuing cannabis treatment her seizures have been reduced to 4 to 5 per week. This was documented by her teacher in a letter to my patient's father. I have another female patient with Multiple Sclerosis. She currently lives in subsidized federal housing and is afraid to grow her own due to federal laws. She lives on a fixed income and cannot afford to purchase medical marihuana from a dispensary or pharmacy. Since she began cannabis treatment her physicians, from the University of Michigan, have been able to reduce her blood pressure medications by 75% and she feels confident that they may be further reduced at her next doctors appointment. It is very clear that the use of medical marihuana can reduce dependence on prescription drugs that can be habit forming and may have potentially dangerous side effects.

There is a very large list of links to illnesses and the many studies that have been done with Cannabis. I invite each member to go to this site for more information. Please go to <http://cannalink.org/granny/>. It is up to 150 pages of links. Please take the time to research the current benefits of medical marihuana and see the potential that this medication has to offer our society. The AMA has found that Cannabis has medical value. This is a step in the right direction. It is my hope that each of the voting panel members will take the time to educate themselves. Please do not undo what the majority of Michigan voters have passed. Medical Marihuana is not a gateway to hard drugs but instead is a gateway FROM addictions to opiates and pharmaceuticals. People taking care of people is what the Michigan voters passed, not more big business with inferior products that are overpriced.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.
Steven S Sharpe